

INTERVIEWEE: HAROLD & LUCILLE WEIGHT

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

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TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

PY: This is an interview with Harold and Lucille Weight for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project by Patricia Young on April 18, 1980, Friday, at one o'clock in the afternoon at their home in Twentynine Palms on

All right, now where we again get it going without having the tape recorder on. Helps if the microphone is on, too. I think if we talk first of your experiences of coming to the area. You were there before the Desert Magazine came to Palm Desert. If you could talk about that.

HW: Is the original idea you mean for moving up there, Anderson and that sort of thing?

PY: Well, let me understand this, were you there before you actually went to look at the sites for the magazine?

HW: It was looking for sites.

LW: I suppose I had been through their on trips years before.

HW: And was looking for a site in the area certainly. I wasn't along. I was down at El Centro still working.

LW: No.

HW: Well, I guess it was before I came down there, part of it, but go ahead.

LW: That was . . . yes. It was immediately after.

HW: Well, now he wrote me from Africa about his ideas of moving it somewhere.

LW: Yes.

HW: The original idea was San Gorgonio Pass, wasn't it?

LW: Have you looked through Desert Editor?

PY: Yes.

LW: Now I think McKinney probably gave the date when they, he and Randall talked about a site. And I remember this in El Centro because they were thinking of a site farther up in San Gorgonio Pass rather than down there because that's just on Highway 111, whereas up in the pass it would have caught both highways, you know. But then later on after when Randall and Cliff were in Africa together, they talked about the possible down there. And as a better site in general. But still they took the site and that's where it was put until after the war, and they

both had come back.

PY: When did you actually then come to Palm Desert area?

LW: As soon as the building was built enough that we could carry on work and our apartment . . .

HW: We were up there before that.

LW: Were there. Well, of course, but we didn't even have gas. Nothing was hooked up, but we had to move then.

HW: Well, then you came up there before the building was started.

LW: Oh, yes!

HW: Well, isn't that what . . .

PY: Yes.

LW: I can't argue. I don't have any calendar or any dates.

It was immediately after the war ended, or they came back from the war. And he had made up his mind pretty much.

We've done remarkably well considering the war situation with shortage of paper and everything else as financially.

And so he decided he could start building. Of course, he had to arrange extra financing, too. But then he started

looking for a site. And Bess Stacey was one who did the bookkeeping for Desert Magazine. She came up from

She had worked with Randall down there before.

And she and I with Randall came up. And Cliff came down

so much. I think he was in Hollywood somewhere there at the time. And they looked at different coves, but we had looked at coves before. But I got to see some of the locations and this, I think, was in a house down at Palm Village, which was, they had a few scattered house . . . Lyman knows about them, down across the highway. We were in one, it was a new house. It had just been built. And Bess and I waited while they did a lot of their travel back and forth looking at coves, I guess, all the way to, well, beyond where it is now, Rancho Mirage which wasn't really Rancho Mirage then. And that was, I can't tell you the date, but I think maybe McKinney was able to document that when he went through newspapers and correspondence. And, of course, a lot of the records of Desert Magazine were just thrown away in that wild move up there. We moved on July fourth, so we wouldn't waste a day of work. (chuckle) It was terribly hot. And that was followed by the coldest winter and all the snow. It closed a lot of the roads unless you had four-wheel drive up through the Santa Rosas and on to San Diego. And there was actually snow right on the ground around the Desert Magazine building. I don't know, that must have been, it could have been

November or it could have been early December. December was when we had that bad earthquake, too.

PY: Why did Randall want to move Desert Magazine to begin with?

LW: Well, he only moved El Central to buy the printing plant that was there, the Elite Printing plant. And see the only Chronicle which was a good going paper, but he realized that a great deal of printing would have to be done because naturally the magazine, not the magazine itself, but all of the promotional stuff and the stationery and stuff which would be very high priced if you had to have it done. And it was for sale by the brothers who owned it and had built it up into quite an important business. They did a lot of work for the big ranches around there. They had great big forms sometimes eight and ten different forms for carbons, you know, for the seed growers and all kinds of, very big ranches. And so that helped to finance the magazine, too, so it was a money maker. And we were first down on the ground floor of the Hotel there. It had the printing plant in the back and our office was the front corner. And when he was able, then he designed and had built the Desert Magazine's second home, which was only about a block away,

but it was a very nice building. And built on the new Mexico Indian design. It was really a combination of Spanish and Indian. And we were there all through the war. And before long, well, here he was, oh, it was Williams, wasn't it Williams of Palm Springs, the architect, and . . .

HW: I think so, yes.

LW: But he did the actually basic design of it. He knew just what he wanted. And as it was being built, it sort of scared him because it was looking much, much larger than he thought it did on paper. We were laughing when we got up there, you need skates to go from the editorial office over to the mailing department and over to the business section. It was very big for that. Of course, the overhead made it very expensive.

HW: So why did he want to leave El Central particularly?

LW: Well, that was just an agricultural center. He really moved up there in order to, he knew that it was a lucrative money-making thing, that printing plant. That was one of the things, and he knew everyone there. He got some fairly steady advertising out of people he had known over many years. Of course, Valerie Jean was when Russ Luppell was one of the first and best helps financially by taking

a page for a long time. And then Haltz there in El Central who had the large farm equipment company, that was a big help in the early days to take that full page every month. And that took a lot of money. Printing costs in El Central, I mean in Los Angeles kept going up and up both for the paper, for the printing, and for the hauling. You had your experience with some of that. (chuckle)

HW: Yes.

LW: He bought a Ford truck, wasn't it?

HW: Yes.

LW: Big, oh, it kind of looked like a state truck, wasn't it to haul the magazines down.

HW: Yes. The forms up and the back.

LW: To El Central. From Los Angeles.

HW: They'd tell me to go up there and take it up there, and I was supposed to deliver some sort of equipment, too, and downtown L. A. I'd never driven a truck in my life. The double clutching, and so I learned.

LW: (laughter) Right through the city.

HW: My folks lived in Pasadena at the time. I delivered the forms, came over there, and I think waited for the magazines and then hauled those magazines back and I

thought I'd get down there alive. But, in other words, he had also besides the printing, he was looking for a better address for Desert Magazine, wasn't he?

LW: Well, not only that, but where more tourists would come, you know.

HW: Yes.

LW: Because we had correspondence with people from every part of the country, clear to the east coast and northwest, and that was, no tourist was interested in going to El Central. It was a farm oriented, and up here, of course, Palm Springs was really just developing then. It was not the kind of place then that it, you, even in ten years after that. And so, no, really before Desert Magazine started, going to the desert wasn't so smart. Of course, there were Tucson and a few places like that that hadn't made a reputation. But I think Desert Magazine had a great deal to do with it. And a lot of people who later came to the desert, they felt a little more familiar with it. It wasn't such a scary place. Of course, there was Grand Canyon, but then the Park Service fellows would take care of the bears. But I think it got just thousands and thousands people desert oriented so they felt familiar with it. And that was

the place that they could enjoy coming down to. Of course, there were no accommodations at all for people in Palm Desert because there wasn't any Palm Desert. But he, now I don't know the individuals he's contacted at first, but people who were, I assume, leaders at Palm Village, they agreed to the post office being named Palm Desert which was like a compromise name. And, of course, with the kind of mailing that Desert Magazine had, that alone could support a good sized post office. I don't know what class it was originally, whether immediately it went into second class or third class, I don't know. I don't know their minimum requirements. So I don't know what else to say. People from all over, you know, as Palm Springs developed, so many people who were executives of the biggest companies in America congregated there in the winter, as you know. And, of course, a lot of them came down to Palm Desert because that was a remarkable looking building to be out there by itself. You know, I don't remember anything being built. Of course, the Firecliff Lodge, that was one of the first things.

HW: Just after you come on that side pretty much.

LW: Yes. And then there were a few of those apartment groups

right near there. Oh, you know, the real estate woman and her mother, they lived in one of them. And, oh, Edith somebody.

PY: Edith Eddy Ward.

HW: Yes, Edith Eddy Ward.

LW: Yes. And her mother. She was a real desert person.

HW: Of course, there was no place for us to stay either.

LW: No.

HW: I don't know if they would rent that or not, but Henderson always, he finally wrote a, tried to write a utopian book on that. He was always pleading incorporation and that sort of thing, so this was designed for all of us to live here. The apartments we designed our own apartment. I mean, planned

LW: Built around the courtyard.

HW: It was built around the courtyard. And we all moved into that and paid rent to the Desert Magazine Corporation, so in a way it was the first . . .

LW: Each one of us, was it four or five?

HW: Four?

LW: Four or five.

HW: I remember four.

LW: And we were allowed a certain square footage.

HW: Yes.

LW: And the whole interior was just to our own design. We did our own.

HW: We had a big living room.

LW: We were next to Randall.

HW: One bedroom and a little kitchen. In other words, somebody else, if there were two of them, like with two sisters, I suppose they had a different one.

LW: They had a very different lifestyle from ours, and of course, we had to have a large living room for books that we brought from El Central and down from Pasadena.

HW: In a jeep pickup.

LW: In a jeep pickup, yes. But those nights, of course, as we could move into it at all, we worked all the time. We were working down there in the day because work had to go on. And late at night then, we would start, and of course, it was in the heat of the summer going clear across the Imperial Valley up through, along by the Salton Sea. Of course, there was no air conditioning, and we had a bucket that started out with ice in the bottom. And I would (chuckle) wring out a cloth or a towel and put around the back of his neck to try to keep him awake and a little bit cool. But you couldn't

be cool. And we would unload and then we'd have, we never spent a night there, did we?

HW: No, we had to be at work in the morning.

LW: We had to go back. We had to be at work the next, at eight o'clock the next morning on our toes. And I don't know how many trips we went back and forth, past that old I'll never forget it. By moonlight. And so the big move was actually done, so not a day's work was lost. Actually done on July fourth.
(chuckle)

HW: And then the cooling system they had on the buildings, they had them wrapped with all these metal pipes going down and crossed from the center.

LW: And sending out heat.

HW: Cooling deal and the heat came out of it more than, you lost all the cool, goes down through there. This is the part I remember most about it.

LW: In fact, the gas they had, oh, was it bottled gas or tanked gas and he had to pay for us to stay at that Sand and Sage Motel until they could get the gas connected, but we had to be there and continue work.

HW: But I thought that cooperative deal was a pretty interesting thing to come down there. And, of course, it was the

first, I suppose, well, had the Firecliff and the restaurants been built by then or not?

LW: I think they were being built about the same time the building was being built. I don't know how many months it took to build that. You see, we were solid at work all the time in El Central. And Randall didn't spend much time down there. I continued more or less as I had during the war, you know, because he spent a lot of time up there with first the architects and then the builders and, of course, he felt he needed to oversee everything, which I think was a very wise thing, you know, the way a lot of building got done. So he made a lot of contacts up there that we didn't know about until later.

HW: There was that one grocery, was that all there was there, across from Palm Desert?

LW: That one market there, and I think it is still there. I've forgotten what they call it. It was the nearest one to us.

PY: Had the Sage and Sand been there prior to your . . .

LW: That was part of that Palm Village. I think that was the name of it. That was my recollection.

HW: Something very similar to that, anyhow.

LW: Yes.

HW: Well, it was there anyhow at the time it was completed, and I don't think it was new. I don't believe it was new, really new at the time.

LW: It's the only one I remember.

PY: You were talking earlier about how Randall had determined the architect for the building.

LW: He loved that kind of architecture. And we didn't have a great many New Mexico features in the magazine, but we had some. But he just seemed, it was compatible with his feelings and his feeling for the desert. It wasn't really original, although certain parts of it were.

PY: What do you mean?

LW: Well, little details were his own.

HW: You mean otherwise it was basic New Mexican or pueblo or something like that.

LW: It was basic New Mexico and pueblo combined, yes. But he, well, I can't remember now and I haven't read Matt's book for quite some time, but he was so enthusiastic. He wanted potters, he wanted weavers, he wanted painters. I've forgotten some of the other crafts and arts, and he made some contacts and I can't tell you with whom, people tentatively who would come there. That's one

root that, have you been in the building? Of course, it's been broken up since then. But he made, he had that long, well, it was almost like a wide hallway clear across of it originally. And he was going to have them all dispersed around the edges along with the exhibits and actually working there. Well, there was very little of that. Now I think in later years Maxwell went over there with his blankets, and of course, he was a trader in New Mexico and not an artisan himself.

HW: I remember anyway, you know, we were not there too long.

LW: No. Of course not.

HW: in July. Didn't we leave the next day?

LW: Well, January, yes.

HW: And so as far as that part of it was concerned. I suppose you have that about Hilton Seventeen Palms paintings which was first put up down at El Central then moved up there and put up on the wall there, I don't know.

LW: You know, that's one reason I wanted to find that magazine because it showed, it painted up there right above my desk.

HW: The big mural.

LW: And Randall was inside his cubby hole office, and I was

there at my desk. And John was painting there. He was up on a ladder painted right above my desk where I was working all the time he was painting Mexican and light opera all the time he was doing that. It was a long, it looked like a Fresco, but actually he glued this canvas to the wall so it looked like a Fresco seventeen palms oasis and vertical badlands. And then we took that from the building which was sold to the telephone company down on El Central and they just extended it their building down there, doubled it in size.

HW: Did John move it or

LW: No.

HW: But he did redecorate, he was working up there at Palm Desert

LW: Yes. He rehabilitated it after it was put up. Yes. Well, it was back there in where the book alcove was.

HW: Yes.

LW: I thought finally, did Seria stay

HW: She gave up on and let them have it, people who had the buildings.

LW: She said it belonged to her and she should have had it, and, oh, I guess they turned it into a kind of a nightclub.

HW: She said she didn't know what she would do with it.

LW: Yes.

HW: I don't know whether the painting, was the painting still there or not?

LW: Not visible.

HW: On those two big doors that would be facing you at the back of that big room in there would be

LW: They may have rearranged everything now.

HW: Yes. So it's quite a valuable thing, I suppose.

LW: Yes, it would have been. That was one of his better ones.

HW: It was a good painting.

LW: Yes. He's over in Hawaii now, at Lahina. He was out here. Well, he still owns his home out here. Came out just before we did.

PY: Out here, you mean Twentynine Palms?

HW: Yes.

LW: Yes.

HW: In fact, I think . . .

LW: He was the founding president of our artists guild.

HW: You're going to have to ask questions if you get much more.

LW: Yes.

HW: We just . . .

PY: Just waiting for you to finish. (laughter) One of the things, did Randall ever talk to you about his feelings about Palm Desert and the development of it?

LW: One of the first things he said to us, this is in El Central and I wish I could remember his exact words because it worried him all the time. He said one thing we have to guard against is the influence from Palm Springs. Of course, none of us was enamored about life at all as we saw it from the outside. But, yes, he was conscious of it all the time and he didn't want to have anything to do with it. But you can't move that close to it and not have some of the influence rub off on some of them.

HW: Well, that kind of development as far as is concerned.

LW: Yes. It was the kind that was attracted to it, naturally, a spillover from Palm Springs. But I think it was, on the whole it was a better location for the development of a resort place. And, of course, one of the advantages to that location, as he saw it, and I think it's true was the Palms Pine Highway coming down there.

HW: Oh, yes.

LW: Because lots of people used that. And, of course, when it was first opened in the early 1930s that was a wonderful thing. That was a way they could get to the ocean, you know, almost directly instead of going clear around by San Geronio Pass. I'm sure a lot of urban development.

PY: Did he express any conflict then in terms of working with Cliff in development of Palm Desert, or was there just a sense of that being his dream as well?

LW: They had very different ideas, very different. Of course, Cliff had been a publicist really most of all before the war. Where have I seen a background. You know, I can't remember in detail, but I think he, I don't know that he started it, but he was involved in Cleveland Air Races which was one of the big things at that time, I guess in the thirties. And then, wasn't the Ice Capades or something like that in L. A. that he was involved in.

PY: Oh, Pan Pacific Theatre?

LW: The Pan Pacific, yes. Really big publicity thing. So they were very different. Their personalities were different and their goals, their ideas about the desert, no. The two were conflicting so far as that was concerned.

HW: Cliff used to come gliding through. I remember they were dragging a chain of important people or some through the showing off the Desert Magazine.

LW: What did they use to call the Hollywood girls? You know, oh, what was the term they used to use?

HW: Starlets, you mean?

LW: Starlets, yes.

HW: Yes, they'd come down. Hedda Hopper used to be coming through. I mean it was kind of a show place where people would come down.

LW: Well, Leonard Firestone and his family, they seemed very nice people. I wish I could remember some who came to the open house which was in October forty-nine. They were just, you know, important people from all over. Some had Cliff had got down there because it was a show-place. It was an advantage to him in trying to sell property. But there were two ideas at work there.

HW: Yes.

PY: Can you describe the open?

LW: The opening? I sold a lot of books. (chuckle) But mainly it was just people who came to see and to admire, and they were given tours all through the plant and editorial offices. And, oh, you know, I ran across a . . .

HW: We've got the program of two or three countries that were there.

LW: Do you know, it was a beautiful little printed program. And, you know, I thought I'd get time to look through some things and this was mainly, you know, most of the, when we moved up there, a lot of the correspondence and many other things that simply were thrown out because there wasn't time to sort through them. And he had some people sorting who knew nothing about the background of the magazine or who was important and correspondence and some was saved for us, especially some that I had had editorial correspondence with. But I don't know whether it, in with, so I picked out a bunch of them and I wrote notes on them when Mac was finishing his book which he had started on Palm Desert. And made little comments. Oh, now here is something that I, have you looked back in the Palm Springs Villager and any of the issues? This is one in November 1948. I said forty-nine, that opening was in forty-eight.

HW: Yes, I guess you're right.

LW: Because forty-nine is when we left. This does give something on Cliff, I believe. Do you want, is that on?

PY: Yes, go ahead. Don't bother.

LW: Well, I thought you might like to just glance quickly through that. It's something that . . . I don't know if this is the one that gives quite a bit on Claire. But this is some of the promotional material to the Shadow Mountain Club.

PY: Yes.

LW: See if I can find them. The opening invitation.

PY: So had Randall really envisioned Palm Desert? Did he talk to you about it at all?

LW: I don't think he envisioned it really as a city at all. It was just a desert, a lovely desert place to publish the magazine.

HW: We were not familiar at all. Of course, Lucille was, called in and so forth into the magazines at that time.

LW: But I was working all the time.

HW: Yes, so was I.

LW: After he came back from the war, you see, we hardly communicated because he was up there most of the time.

PY: Spacious residential blocks as low as nine hundred and fifty dollars.

LW: Yes, imagine. Now that is real history.

PY: Units five and six, preopening opportunities.

HW: And it was.

LW: It certainly was for the first one.

HW: Those were opening programs things that they were, I found several of them and I think I turned them over to you, but that was quite recently.

LW: Oh, really.

HW: Yes.

LW: Heavens, I don't know where they would be.

HW: I don't think I've got . . . I could take a look.

LW: There's one other folder I can look through. I know where one usually is. This is Randall Henderson sitting at his desk in his little alcove office. And this is the exterior of the building which was the second home of the Desert Magazine at El Central. And this is the interior, oh, Hilton had not painted it then. Somewhere I have a picture of this, this was where the Seventeen Palms painting covered that whole area above. This was my desk right here and that was his over divider in an alcove. And this was out in our sales area. We had Indian pottery books. And I started a book store for Desert Magazine and our business section was over at this end. And our printing plant was in the rear.

PY: Now was this the Palm Desert or El Central?

LW: El Central.

HW: El Central.

LW: This was the building that he designed and had built right there in El Central not far from the Monion Hotel where we started. That is the end of the telephone building which later bought this and they reconstructed the front to conform to their style. They had the tile roof. And that gives a background on Randall. I'll try to get the date of this. I have a front page. This is February 1940, Valley Homebuilder, which was their, a house organ.

PY: Where, at El Central?

LW: Yes. The Nevada California Electric was the company at that time. I think that is the whole article.

PY: I see.

LW: Roy was their public relations man and he edited this magazine for quite awhile.

PY: Now when you moved to Palm Desert did Randall also live in the apartments that he built. I mean did everyone have

LW: Yes.

HW: He had the front one.

LW: He designed his own. He was in one corner right next to

ours.

HW: The circulation manager and his family. What was his name?

LW: Martin

HW: Yes. And . . .

LW: Didn't and Kaye have the south end of it?

HW: Well, some of them. There were only five of them, but

LW: And Lena and Bethy.

HW: Yes.

LW: Had the one on the other side of Randall.

HW: It's the brown, I guess they'd have to. There was no place else.

LW: I believe they did on the south. They were Jon Martin and . . . so I think there were five of us in there. I think we had a larger one than Beth and Lena did.

HW: I think so.

PY: Also in this article in 1948 it's describing the crowds that . . .

LW: We used Randall's in October for the opening.

PY: Well, how many people, you know . . .

LW: I have no idea.

PY: Hundreds or thousands.

LW: Well, I imagine it would be hundreds, but . . .

HW: We were both working at it at the time and many were coming through.

LW: I don't know whether anyone had a guest book even, but I know Harold was busy meeting people and I guess you showed them around part of it. And then Randall, I'm sure, he took some of the special parties around on a complete tour. But I was there in the book section and greeting people. Lot of people I'd corresponded with through the years, you know, came and I met them for the first time there. But were all at our stations because someone had to be there to greet people who were interested in certain sections and building, certain operations of it.

PY: So they were coming because they were aware of Desert Magazine, not because they were coming, you know, they were in the area?

LW: Oh, yes. Oh, I think so because this had been announced in an earlier issue of the magazine. I don't remember which one, but we must have announced it in more than once when it was moving. That was a tremendous job changing all their addresses, you know.

HW: The Desert Magazine subscriptions, readers at that time were very loyal and very, I don't know what you would call

it exactly. I mean as my interest in Desert Magazine had got me corresponding and brought me down there.

LW: They had a very personal feeling in it.

HW: Very strong personal feeling.

LW: It was their magazine.

HW: And so a lot of them would have been those people, but also it was publicized in Palm Springs.

LW: Yes.

HW: I imagine Cliff was quite busy in bringing in both . . .

LW: Oh, I'm sure he was.

HW: Friends and prospective purchases down there.

LW: Yes.

HW: But it was a good sized crowd. I mean when you're involved that way you don't

LW: Oh, they just kept coming and going. Unless you had a guest book there would be no way of estimating at all. Just a lot of people in front all the time.

HW: I don't know what would have happened to the guest book by now.

LW: No.

HW: If we had one.

PY: It also said on the announcement of moving that freighting and shipping should go to Indio. Was that because of the

railroad?

LW: That's right. It was on the railroad. Yes. That would be the shipping point. And from there then they would be transferred to trucks, but the mailing address would have to be that. But the post office was established, well, it had to be established there by the time we did our first mailing there.

HW: Yes.

LW: And that old man, Bill somebody. I should remember him. He died since. I guess he wasn't too well. I believe he was a veteran, but he was the first postmaster. I'm sure that was in Mac's book.

HW:

LW: Yes. And his wife lived there. They were pioneers, too.

PY: Can you describe Randall a little bit?

LW: You mean physically?

PY: No, no. How you felt about him. What kind of a person he was.

LW: He was a very complex person. He was very different.

HW: Two complete personalities.

LW: Yes. He was very different at different times. And he loved to get out in the desert. And I think when he was with a group of say Sierra Clubbers he was more like the

person he wanted to be than at any other time. He really let himself go, and he made some very close and personal friends. But when he was back in business, I think he was under a tremendous pressure all the time. I know Nina knows him very well, too, but she didn't work with him as I did in it. Carolyn did, but . . .

HW: She had a lot of discussions with him whenever they wanted anything.

LW: Yes.

HW: He drove himself terrifically and he expected the same from other people.

LW: Yes, but he just had that inner tension all the time. You could feel it, and it was very difficult to work with him, although sometimes tension released maybe after he'd solved one hard problem, you know. I remember one time he did, he enjoyed taking pictures and he was very good at it, too. He had a sense of composition. And he needed some flower pictures, and that was the first time I ever really got out in the desert there in El Central because I was there at the desert all the time. It was one Sunday. Naturally it wouldn't be a work day. He wanted me to go out with him out in the area where someone had said the florist had started and they

certainly, they're just all over. So I was holding it, you know, he took a lot of pictures but he wanted them to show up well for closeups in the magazine. And he had these backdrop cloths and I was holding this black satine thing up (chuckle) for him to take pictures. And he was completely different from when he was in the office.

HW: He believed in the philosophy expressed in Desert Magazine completely . . .

LW: Oh, yes.

HW: Person is sometimes different. I came down there, see, right after, I got out of the Air Force and it was way, what was that veterans business which was training, on the job training so I went down there with him. So not long after I'd been there he wanted to go out on a weekend, was it a weekend, must have been a weekend.

LW: Up to the south something?

HW: He wanted to go up to Marshall South with the rest of them. And we're out there, I guess it was Earthquake Valley, we were camped there in the morning. And he wanted me to fix the breakfast or something and working with the thing and the pancakes. And he said, and mainly I was working with him. He said, "I judge a man by how

he flips pancakes," or some such thing or some such remark as that.

LW: (laughter)

HW: Smiling at me.

LW: Oh, I was so amazed when he told me that. I'd never heard of it, but I have heard since that that was a cast of other people the way they flipped flapjacks. We didn't even eat flapjacks when we went on the desert trips.

HW: It was exactly the same thing with that truck. He didn't ask me if I could drive the truck. I had no license to drive a truck. He said, "Take this up to Los Angeles. Bring the magazines back."

LW: When something needed doing . . .

HW: You do it. That's the way.

LW: And he said one time, "There is simply no word such as can't. There isn't any can't."

HW: That was bad for himself, too.

LW: Another thing, you know, it came out a little bit, he was conscious of the way he was. When we had left the Desert Magazine and, of course, Harold had agreed to keep on writing as frequently as he could, and unexpectedly we had no idea ever putting on a magazine of our own, but we found ourselves editing and publishing it. We were

over there one time talking with him. And I don't know if you can remember the words, but he said, "Don't let yourself get tied down like I have." And, well, we said, "Ha ha, we wouldn't." You know. (laughter) We almost killed ourselves just in those three years, but he realized what he had done to himself in a way because there were many ways he liked to, he would have liked to have expressed his life that he couldn't. But he, as we, had always had that work ethic. This is ground into us, and you can't get rid of it when you have it. And he was that way. And I don't know if he ever got rid of any guilty feeling when he was out having a good time on the Colorado River or the Whitewater Rivers farther north. He wanted to cover nearly all of those rivers up there, and I guess he did a good part of them. I don't know where all. He loved to talk about them. And some of the best times that we could talk was when he was completely away from the magazine, when they had the place up in the mountains. Have you talked to Seria and . . .

HW: After we'd left the magazine and afterwards he was more or less into Americas when they were caught by that time. It was kind of different attitude.

LW: Yes. But when he, you know, he discovered so many of those palm oasis that had never been mentioned by anyone and certainly had never been documented in any way. And there were countless ones. Now I don't know how many he found. And he had a wonderful collection of pictures of them and people would laugh about his counting palms. Well, how else can you get any idea the extent of these oasis that went way up these canyons like that Thousand Palms Canyon.

HW: Went down into Baja, all those canyons down there.

LW: And Baja, and he wrote about a number of them in early days and I kept trying to get him to write a book about all of these instead of just those that had been in various magazines. But he, the little one that he did, it was on Baja, wasn't it?

HW: No, I don't think so. Well,

LW: He never, well, he didn't do nearly all of them.

HW: Oh, no. It was just a little booklet.

LW: It could have been something any library should have had because no one else could have had anything like it.

HW: No one knew it the way he did.

LW: Oh, no.

HW: He was hard on himself in those ways. He'd go out and

live sort of a rugged life.

LW: This punishing himself.

HW: He drove this old Ford. They'd get stuck in and dig their way out down in the desert country when there was no one around much in the thing. He was a complex person. He really was.

LW: Yes.

HW: And nobody else, I think, could have carried it. Desert Magazine was Randall Henderson, period. No one since then has . . .

LW: Twice he tried us to come back.

HW: Yes.

LW: And once Seria came over her when she was worried about his heart condition without his knowing.

HW: Of course, some of this is off the record. We wouldn't want that sort of thing in that way, but we want Seria to feel . . .

LW: No.

HW: In this way about it.

LW: Well, it wouldn't make any difference now that he isn't alive.

HW: No.

LW: But she, of course, she wouldn't want him to know of it.

She was just worried about him. Now that was in the midfifties or earlier when she came over here. Well, I guess they both felt that after we ended our calico print at the end of 1953 that we were free, but actually we wanted to be free. (chuckle) Just write and travel as we wanted. That's why we left Desert Magazine.

HW: It wasn't just that, though.

LW: We didn't want any deadlines.

HW: I would not have gone back to work for them again.

Side 2 of 2:

LW: Well, we didn't want that kind of a life.

HW: We didn't want that kind of a life, no. I suppose we could have stayed on, but also he found it very difficult to delegate real authority. He wanted to handle it all.

LW: He was not a real administrator because he had been used to doing everything himself. And he never gave up the idea.

HW: So he was a difficult man to work for. And he was an excellent man for the job he did. And all of his life, as I say, he had these utopian ideas. A good part of his later life he was writing this, you know, like what a utopian book it was going to be. And I guess he couldn't

sell it, as I recall.

LW: Well, he became, for a period at least, enamored of the Swedish experiment.

HW: It was very for that time.

LW: And he just expounded that to us. And Harold went right back to, well, you have to think of human nature. But these things looked so wonderful on paper, but they reckon without people.

HW: So I mean that was always in the background. It showed in his editorials.

LW: When he should have wrote . . .

HW: He didn't believe in profit motive as such. He didn't believe in capitalism as such. People should work for because they wanted to work, work for each other. You know, idealistic really, the way things should be, the way they certainly should be.

LW: But, of course, well, in a way he went by that rule, too, in the Chronicle. Now when he came up to El Central and started the magazine his employees down there, now I don't know whether it was a legal partnership, but they run it like a partnership. And I don't know how profitable it was for them, but he expected everyone to work as hard as he did. And eventually if

they'd stuck it out long enough they stood to gain a good deal.

HW: Yes, that's right.

LW: And in my own case I worked all the time. I really dragged myself down and I became quite ill, but I continued working. But in the end I received a certain amount of stock. Well, you might say it was unearned, but really I had earned a whole lot more than that. But at least it was a way of getting a share back from my efforts beyond, all the salaries are very small and for years and years he never got a penny. He didn't have any salary out of that magazine. And I remember one time, don't know whether this should be on the record, but this was in the early days down there. That there wasn't enough for a payroll. And I was getting practically nothing, but I said, "Well, don't pay me." And that went into the kitty to help. Well, you had to pay the printers in the back room, you know, because the presses had to turn. And that was the way, it was just a shoe-string. It was a terrible effort. And I guess that pressure built up over many years in him.

HW: Yes. And it built it up until he built that magazine.

LW: And he didn't explode, so you can imagine the kind of tension he was under. I don't think I've ever, well,

that one guy (chuckle) he got awfully mad at. They had quite a discussion, but I think that was over philosophy rather than any local thing, you know.

HW: But you see since then, of course, the people who bought it next were just not, two outfits.

LW: They were desert people.

HW: Were not Desert Magazine people. They had no conception of it as he did and as subscribers. It was never a large subscription paper, but, and of course, nowadays you have to have the advertising to pay the bill. But it was just a different, the feeling was not there. Now the Nebbitts.

PY: Can you elaborate on what that feeling was that he had? What the subscribers . . .

HW: They believed in him as, what, not like a St. Francis, but I mean . . .

LW: Well, an idealist.

HW: An idealist and the government or the desert, which of course I wrote the same way, it was a place where people, in a way healed themselves.

LW: Could expand.

HW: They expanded themselves.

LW: They expanded themselves.

HW: And the people who read Desert Magazine, subscribed to

it, they loved the desert, but they came to that love, to a certain extent, through Desert Magazine. He expressed their feelings.

LW: And was editorials and the tone of a good many articles, especially those that you wrote.

HW: That's right. Well, but his editorials were all that way, the way the human situation should be. And so, I mean, it was more than a magazine with me before I came down there. It's something I believe in completely. I mean, you just felt that there was a fellowship.

LW: That is how Harold first became interested in Desert Magazine from reading the editorials and the articles. And, of course, then he was four years in the Army Air Corps. And he would write in, sometimes making corrections and other times asking for information. And he also bought books after we started that section. And wherever he was stationed and I didn't see nearly all of his letters, I saw some, and then as war was ending and he came back (laughter)

HW: It was before I came back.

LW: Oh.

HW: Oh, you mean Henderson.

LW: Henderson.

HW: Yes, yes.

LW: I think you were sent to out of Salt Lake by then,
weren't you?

HW: Yes, I was up there

LW: Where you were when he, he got interested in some of
Harold's ideas and the knowledge they showed. Also he'd
sent in photos. And he got me to write to Harold to
find out if he had any plans for after the war, but I
wasn't to commit ourselves, see. (chuckle) I had to
write this diplomatic letter and I really didn't know
what he had in mind for him. He didn't even go into
details. Everything was tentative. And I don't recall,
did I see your answering letter. I think you must have
written to him.

HW: I don't know whether you did or not. I was interested
in it. Before the war, I was a printer and Linotypist
and so that sort of thing. And he wanted me to come down
there and work part time in the back shop. And part
time was associate editor, and I just didn't want to
start that way. I mean it was quite awhile afterwards
before . . .

LW: Well, it was . . .

HW: Yes, it was, just before you got there.

LW: You were almost a year out before you would go down there because he wanted to go around the country.

HW: Yes. I was having a good time. I had money I'd saved up and going around the desert.

LW: Yes.

HW: And . . .

LW: And his father took a one long swing around the desert.

HW: And then he had the full-time job as associate editor and I came back to that. Lucille was the other one.

LW: First time I ever heard of his idea. Now as a child I lived in Imperial Valley. We were out on a ranch. And my folks took the Chronicle. And I think my mother once had met him. And, of course, this is long before, and then in the meantime we had moved to San Diego over in Ocean Beach near Sunset Cliff out on Point Loma. And I, after awhile I was writing for a paper there and doing quite a bit of historical research. I was interested in that. Well, a mutual friend of ours in El Central knew about it because he had a summer home over there. And I knew nothing about their idea of starting a magazine. And it was, I don't, oh, it was Henderson himself who came over there, and he sat out in one of our sun rooms. It was the February before the

magazine was first out. And he hired me right then, but not to start until fall because they were doing all the preliminary work, getting ready, and, while he was in the process of buying this Elite Printing Company. So I was supposed to look further. (chuckle) They thought I could find a cheap second-hand desk in San Diego, but you couldn't find any cheap office furniture, you know, even then. And that was still in the depression. But I went over there and I think he said somewhere in September, it may have been September when I went there. I was thinking it was in October, but I guess I was working out. It must have been September because our November issue was the first one. And we mailed it out in October. And the first thing I did was, we had these, have you seen any of the brochures, the original brochures. The cover was the cover of our first issue, November thirty-seven. It was a large

with sort of a sunset and brownish background. It's rather attractive. I folded and folded those and addressed them to a long mailing list that he and Mac had accumulated from, oh, newspaper acquaintances and subscribers. The L. A. Times had given quite a bit of publicity because Henderson, you know, graduated from

USC in journalism and he knew Harry Carr and a good many of the newspaper people who were still around. And I think Harry Carr gave him some of his first advice on if he really wanted to go up in newspaper work to go out and get a little country, you read about that, a little country paper which he went to work for one of the smallest ones, I guess, in the country. And so through those contacts he had quite a mailing list. That was my first work, and then I started taking care of a lot of correspondence and all the subscriptions and part of the book work. Because the three of us, that was it. And Mac was out on the road again trying to get advertising.

HW: So you learned something about Desert Magazine. But that doesn't have much about Palm Desert.

LW: No, that's it.

PY: Well, that's an important part of Palm Desert.

LW: Well.

PY: It's the beginning of it.

LW: Interesting beginning all right.

PY: Do you . . . go ahead.

HW: I was just going to say it's too bad that the Nibbetts weren't better financed and that he wasn't in better health because they were the first ones that was trying

to make that magazine more or less the way it was.

LW: Yes. They had the feel for it, but he had to have that oxygen tank back there and right in the middle of a conversation go back there and get some oxygen. And it was just a pity, and we don't know how they're getting along, how he is getting along now.

PY: What is their name, Gnybett?

HW: Gnybetts. Gnybett. They just sold . . .

LW: Bill and Joy. They just sold last summer.

HW: This last summer, which was the making of, what we could call it.

LW: I don't know what

HW: It's sort of a slick like, you know, not the Villager, like the Villager thought it was in the beginning or the Tucson paper or magazine or something like that. And they're getting some good articles, but it's just, it's a completely different . . .

PY: More like Westways

HW: Well, I think Westways, I wrote for Westways. It's more like Sunset, only it's, I mean it's just slick. There's no personal feeling, really no personal feeling and some rather odd choices for some things.

LW: Well, we had so many specialists writing for Desert

Magazine in the early days. And it was scientists and historians and people who really knew their subject, you know.

HW: The same reason, getting practically nothing for it, but they had the feel and this was an outlet for them to say what they wanted to say or to help along with the thing.

LW: Well, you know, in the very early days, this isn't a very good parallel, but the difference between Harper's and Atlantic. Harper's then, I don't know how it evolved later, written by, oh, professional writers who did research on many different subjects, while the Atlantic was done by people whose whole life, you might say, was devoted to a particular section or a segment of knowledge or a commentary.

HW: And yesterday we were, I went out, oh, I suppose at least once a month and turned it off from that to get field trips or something like that. And all you had to say was made Desert Magazine out in Nevada or Arizona or anything like that and you had friends. You really had friends like that.

LW: It's just like the key to the . . .

HW: Yes.

LW: And that place.

HW: They'd take you out on trips. They'd tell you things about that. And it was something else during those years.

LW: Yes. You were just their friend for life.

HW: Yes, that's right. We did stay friends with a lot of them for life, too.

LW: Yes, as long as they lived. But, you know, that was one thing, another reason we left because more and more Harold was just sent out on these trips, and I had to stay with the circulation of books and we didn't like that at all. We just didn't envision our lives continuing that way in the least. Couldn't live our lives just on the weekends. And that would be only one day, that weekend. (laughter)

HW: Yes. Do you have any questions?

PY: How was Desert Magazine received in the valley?

LW: Coachella Valley?

PY: Yes.

LW: Oh, we had a lot of wonderful subscribers there. Some would give it to ten and twelve different people a year, all over the country.

HW: Nina could tell you that a little bit more, too, but see, Nina could tell you that.

LW: Yes.

HW: How about Palm Springs where there's so many, of course, Palm Springs was different then.

LW: Well, you see, we had quite a newsstand sale and it was hard to tell because I think more the newsstand buyers would be there because they weren't regular residents. You know, in those days to us it doesn't seem very long ago, but in those days there weren't many year round residents. They'd travel or they lived back in Detroit or on the east coast, somewhere else. So a lot of them would just pick it up at newsstands. Somewhere I have some circulation records of it at that period and before, early ones. I don't know where those are.

PY: Did you feel that there was some appreciation of the desert amongst the people living in the valley at that time?

LW: I think it was an eye opener to a lot of them, really, because a lot of those people at that time, they were involved in earning a living then. That wasn't an easy living there. It was very costly developing those ranches. Nina certainly knows that, but you know, later on when there was much more development and they brought the Coachella branch, All American Canal, in all the taxes

on that land, but they've been horrible. And if you lose a crop the year on which you borrowed from the bank, that was it for a lot of them, if they couldn't get refinanced. And that was their concerns. But I think that until it was right there in their midst, maybe a lot of them hadn't thought so much of it. They hadn't had time to go out and travel outside their development apartment. Of course, I don't call that the desert and at El Central. That's why I didn't like it. Unless you get out in the unprocessed desert, you can't appreciate it. A lot of those people when they first came that is all of the desert, they were simply trying to make enough money that they could retire or buy a nice place completely away from the desert. And that's why a lot of them, even though they started making money, they lived in shacks, what we would just call shacks. This was not their permanent home. They never even thought of it as their permanent home. And that really came in much later years, kind of living they have now.

PY: Do you think that kind of attitude, lack of concern then really about the area as being a home, had much to do with how the area developed?

LW: Oh, I'm sure.

HW: You mean Palm Desert itself?

PY: Just the whole area there.

LW: You mean so far as residents? Oh, certainly.

HW: Yes.

LW: It had everything to do with it.

HW: Oh, yes, definitely. Except when they started getting these resort homes, resort cities, which Palm Springs became. It was another matter. I mean it was not a year round deal. But the people, that is true, particularly at El Central. They came there to make money and to get out, to get out in the summer, and to get out with the money as soon as they could.

LW: And people out in the country, they had no electricity. You can imagine in temperatures of a hundred and twenty degrees. Right there in that new office of ours in El Central, I saw it over a hundred and twenty degrees. That was inside the building. You know, and the people outside who had no electricity, you can imagine. Little babies being raised in that, you know, they could hardly survive. They couldn't be interested in staying there forever. It was close to the early Twentynine Palms, that's the way they lived. It wasn't as hot, but it gets awfully hot sometimes. And if you have no electricity

at all to help cool you or even to have a refrigerator and maybe have to haul your ice from the pass somewhere and more than half would be melted by the time it got out here. That was, you know pioneer times are very recent in this desert.

PY: Oh, I was reading one thing in this article to do with the quarter-mile tracks, horse tracks, in Palm Desert. I had never heard of that.

LW: I never heard of that. I wonder if that was something Cliff had envisioned. Could be that.

PY: You were talking earlier about Randall meeting his second wife here. And you were the one that introduced them.

HW: Yes. I was just coming out of the office and taking some coffee back to the printers back in there, and here she was looking around the place. So I, you know, spoke to her, and she was interested. And I showed her around a little bit then, and I said, "Would you like to meet Mr. Henderson?" So she went in and met Mr. Henderson. But she's got some other . . .

LW: She doesn't remember that, but I was a witness to that.

HW: What's her name wasn't even there, was she?

LW: Catherine?

HW: Marie.

LW: Marie.

HW: She may have been at that time. I'm not sure

LW: She may have been out to lunch or off somewhere. No, I don't think Marie was over there, but her desk was there. But there was no one out there. I was back there. I looked up and saw her, but, of course, I wouldn't know but what, you know, what her purpose was. But Harold happened to be coming out at the time, and he went immediately to greet her.

HW: See what she wanted.

LW: And that was her fate. (laughter)

HW: Yes.

LW: She learned about our desert after that.

PY: Randall was interested in her because she was a sculptress and that fit in somehow?

LW: Well, I, yes, I think that was the idea because I think she told us later that she had had the idea, she must have heard of this idea, and she thought that perhaps this was a place that she could do some sculpting right there and have some . . . She had, I don't know how much she had with her from Africa at that time, but she had worked for two different studios, hadn't she? She had been working in Hollywood.

HW: She was a very attractive woman in personality and in

vitality at that time.

LW: Oh, yes.

HW: So, I mean, that could have been as much interest on Randall's part as anything else.

PY: On his businesswise, had some interest in . . .

HW: I don't think it started as far as he was concerned, business at all.

LW: Well, I think there was a chemical mixture there immediately.

HW: Yes, I think it was just one of those things.

LW: In fact, now we were married in March forty-seven.

HW: Yes.

LW: And then we moved up there. Now it must have been that fall of forty-eight when she came in there the next March, wasn't it? They were married. That fast.

HW: It was fast.

LW: Yes.

HW: She managed some things she didn't like and hiking up the River she got, you know, sunstroke and that sort of thing, but she went along and tried it.

LW: Well, that's it. She, I guess it was really after that trip and she had never had, she had all kinds of experiences in her life which were high adventure, but

she never had any physical experience like that. And I guess once you get heat stroke you simply cannot take the heat after that. And it was very hard on her. And that was one reason they got the mountain place, and she'd go up there. But, you know, he had designed and built that other home. That was after we left, some time. I wonder . . .

HW: In Palm Desert.

LW: When that happened because we saw it, we liked it very much, the one he designed and had built. Well, then when they were married, she designed the second house.

HW: Have you been in that one they built?

LW: No.

HW: It's a nice, everything nice.

LW: Oh, it was a lovely place.

PY: What was it like?

HW: Enormous living room, some kind of a divided two-level

LW: With a very high, Nina could probably describe it better than I, high sloping roof. Their, Randall and Seria's home that she designed. Well, down . . .

: They never knew she designed it, but I saw it.

LW: Yes, down . . .

: Been there a few times.

LW: Down near the center of it there was a planting area
that really had . . .

HW: With running water.

LW: Yes, with running water. And she had that, was it
Father Garsa's and at one end of it.
It's big. Well, it's the one in the Randall Henderson
wing of the Palm Desert Library. It was put there . . .

HW: Is it still there?

LW: Well, it was. I mean, that's where it was.

HW: Oh, that wasn't

LW: Father

PY: What are you saying is in the wing?

LW: Well, I thought, oh, no, that was the Ramona one, wasn't
it?

HW: That was Ramona, yes.

LW: That she gave.

HW: Yes.

LW: Yes, it's right at the entrance.

HW: This other was Father and one of the Indian.

LW: What has she done with it?

HW: Well, she was trying to get it to the Eisenhower Memorial
Hospital, but the last I knew it was still in that living

room. And there's an enormous rock fireplace there.

LW: Yes.

HW: All one wall in the thing.

LW: Over the whole thing.

PY: This is the one that Randall built or designed or the one that Seria designed?

HW: Well, that's the one that they lived in.

LW: It's the one that she designed.

HW: She did design it. But anyhow the one after they were married.

LW: Yes.

HW: The one that she lived in until she went back to Tucson.

LW: Yes.

HW: Stayed down there several times.

LW: Well, that's where they lived when he died.

HW: Orange trees right around there. Large lodge.

LW: Well, at the time, well, there's still nothing up above their place.

HW: It was right up against the canyon.

LW: Well, you know, old Chuckwalla Trail?

HW: Old Prospector.

LW: Old Prospector Trail.

HW: Old Prospector Road.

LW: Yes.

HW: But the whole, that reserve area is right fence, right along the fence there.

LW: Yes.

HW: I mean nothing built, nothing going to be built there.

LW: And he did a lot of work there on the garden part of all native things, and he had a little . . .

HW: Original drain.

LW: Drainage. Like, yes, for a stream and a little, well, a tiny bridge over it.

HW: I think they were working there when he had his stroke, wasn't he?

LW: He was out there when he had his first stroke, Honey.

Yes. And she was in the house and she wasn't aware.

And then that was the first one, and we went by to see them and we were shocked to find he was down in Indio, a hospital right then. And he couldn't see anyone.

PY: What was the first house like that he designed? Was that also pueblo style?

HW: I don't remember that one.

LW: No, well, it was just a very simple desert style. I don't know how to describe it. It looked like adobe, but I don't think it was. You remember the first house that

Randall built, you know, after he moved out of our pueblo area. Would you call that, it's just a very simple desert style, wasn't it a little bit like yours at Star Dune?

: I don't recall that house at all. I don't know whether I ever even knew it.

LW: Well, it was built on, you know he reserved, I think was it twenty acres of forty acres. And he didn't want any encroachment from the Palm Desert Development Group, you know. And this was the house he built then and it was his design. It was very nice. I enjoyed it, and he had his Indian rugs and all the things that he brought up from El Central, and he had gathered. That rug there, he gave us as a wedding present.

Well, we had that registered. No one else is supposed to copy and use it in any way. But, believe me, it's been picked up.

HW: Yes.

LW: Yes. That particular style of trimming.

HW: That was where, you know, the condominium or whatever you want to call it up there.

LW: Yes.

HW: Only this is after we left. Now that was the one Henderson lived in and that was the one we had right in there.

LW: Oh, I thought that wasn't the Desert Magazine planted, don't look familiar. Yes, he was in this corner and we were right next to him. Right there. And then, see, it was built around. Have you seen it? It's built around a more or less square. Now I don't know what it's like now. I think those must be the oleanders that must have been put in almost about the time they started building it. No, it was just barren.

HW: This is the later one and that antenna.

LW: It was barren sand around there.

HW: I wonder if that's a TV antenna to bring all this stuff.

: There was no such thing as TV.

HW: For the local people there.

LW: No. One time we didn't join them. All of the Desert Magazine people were supposed to go up, wasn't it to Desert Skiis way up Santa Rosa.

HW: I thought you did go.

LW: Oh, no. I didn't want to go up there. Desert Ski,

It had a place that, it seems to me it must have been on the, on or next to the Indian reservation,

up there to the left, way up Santa Rosa Mountains.

PY: Desert Center or . . .

LW: No, Palms to . . . Desert Center was his business, but he had a summer place way up there, Pinon Flats. That's where it was. Yes, we just couldn't go up there. But they did have another outing. It was in the evening and out to door, a separate type thing. I don't know if you ever, there was Ted Hutchinson. Well, at that time he was in Rancho Mirage. But he had done, you know, a lot of experimenting with desert plants, and you'll find a few of his articles in the Desert Magazine. He is, so far as I know, was the first one who experimented with his own desert holly from seed. And a lot of other desert plants that no one else had worked with. Very interesting person. And he was the one, he wanted to do this. He made a great, I don't know where he got this kettle, Now his grandmother was a Californian, Spanish, and it was the most wonderful flavor and something you couldn't imagine. And I found out from him what it was. She used mint in it and he used her old recipe and the meatballs with a great big, do you remember that.

HW: I sure do.

LW: I can't even remember the, I know it was hot when we were all outside there and it was in the deep dusk. It really was almost dark.

HW: I don't know what the occasion was.

LW: Well, maybe it was just when we all got moved in. It was before the opening. I was just telling Pat where they, we did not go. We didn't choose to go. No.

: Well, I went on two or three outings.

LW: Oh! I didn't know how long they were carried on.

(BLANK FOR QUITE AWHILE)

PY: Tended to have other businesses then.

LW: No. Oh, no. Not at all. That was, I don't know what, that was after we left. That had been some business department over there, our own business department. But, of course, that brought in quite a bit of, that was when the Bank of America was rented, you know, that corner over there. No, that was a much later development. I don't know when he took this picture. I was wondering, well, you see before it was an advantage to them because they had to go clear into Indio to do the banking. Well, and there was no bank around here. And, see, we were

eleven miles each way from Palm Springs and Indio. And so that helped them a great deal. I was going to ask you if anyone had said anything to you about the five-acre homestead that Randall took out for, there were six to eight of us up there in that big cove. You go to Palms or to Pines Road, and I don't know how many miles it is up to there, and that great big cove to the right. At that time there was absolutely nothing there. You remember . . . Did you . . . Did he put in . . .

: Go down that side of the mountain ourselves.

LW: Well, this was just several . . .

: to Palms Pines Road. You see, there's Pines Road wasn't open when we first homesteaded.

LW: Well, I'm talking about after Desert Magazine moved up there, Nina.

: Yes.

LW: And you know the big cove, oh, I wish I could remember, you know, Tommy Thompson, his sister's husband, you know where they built up on top of that little funny hill. Well, just beyond there was a great big cove that opens out to the right. And Randall took out five acres homesteads. He, we all signed ours, but we were still down in El Central, but he knew, they had just surveyed this

land to open it for five acre. There were always five acres at the beginning.

: Is that where you turn off to go to the, well, there was the Thompsons and

LW: It was just beyond the Thompsons where you turned off. And it was a huge cove back in there.

: Yes, I know I've been there.

LW: Well, I wondered if you had, if you were one that he applied for.

: No.

LW: Well, there's six to eight of us . . .

: It was way before that.

LW: Oh, I know that. But this, he filed on these right after it was surveyed and opened by the land office in Los Angeles. You don't remember that?

: Oh, yes, I know them.

LW: Do you remember Catherine?

: Yes.

LW: Well, she had one close to us and Randall did and I've forgotten who else. There were six to eight of us involved in Desert Magazine. Well, Harold and I, we saw ours, but you know we don't, like a colony existence, we just weren't like that. And, of course, there was

no water or electricity in there. Of course, now it would be valuable land. But we paid . . .

: There's a lot of that land, but built on or it's owned.

LW: Oh, yes. We paid for the first five years. You couldn't buy them outright, you know. You had to pay by the year. You made your small down payment and paid by the year very little. And then you had to build on it.

: Southern Pacific Land Company or not?

LW: Oh, no. It was public land.

: Well, we bought, you see, we bought thirty-five from the, every other section.

LW: Yes.

: Belonged to the railroad.

LW: Yes.

: And we bought thirty-five first.

LW: Yes.

: And with three other, with, well, two other people. There were four of us, Steve and me. And then Eddie Burnett, who was a neighbor, has a ranch that go into ours. And, oh, what's his name. Oh, that used to be up there at, just started that little thing, kind of a tourist camp up at Rivenwood.

LW: Howell, Wilson Howell.

- : Howell. Wilson Howell.
- LW: Yes.
- : And we bought all together this section, thirty-five.
- LW: Yes. But that was way up the mountain. This was before you really start up the mountain.
- : Well, no. You were up quite a little ways.
- LW: Well, yes, but not . . .
- : In there. We had to go clear around and go in the other way.
- LW: Yes.
- : There was no highway from the valley.
- LW: Yes.
- : At that time at all. We had to go in at the, that cattle ranch, the Garner Ranch, over below Idyllwild there where Hemet Lake is.
- LW: Yes.
- : And we had to go through the Garner Ranch and open and shut seven gates, go through those pasture lands, and then we hit, after we got over there, for miles and miles we hit Creek. And that, we straddle on Creek and go up to where there was an old mining road that just took off right straight up it, dirt bank, and to the old asbestos mine. And that was built later,

whoever it was that claimed the mine. It was reclaimed and let go and reclaimed over and over again. And it was only short-fiber asbestos; it wasn't, well, later when they started using it for insulation, if it had been right easy of access, it might possibly have amounted to something, although I don't know if there was enough of the material for that. But it never amounted to anything in those days. And over and over people tried to do something with it. A man that worked for us went over and when he quit, we provided him with a cabin. And he helped us off and on. And he went over there and got himself a job one time. But it didn't last. There was nothing that they could really go on with. And then Vic, his name was Vic he went to work for Mr. Taylor up there, who he bought several sections. On the other side of the highway a little higher up and a little farther toward Nightengale than we were. And he built himself a house. And then later he added to it and built another house for someone to, some of his kids to stay in. He was a retired man from the, one of the big insurance firms. I can't, it wasn't Manchester. Oh, but it was a big insurance company, well known at that time and still is. And he was a past officer in that.

And he was on his pension. He had quite a little money. Gave his family enough of the, his pension to live in Los Angeles because none of them. He had a number of children, but they were grown up. And his wife was just, she wouldn't come up there at all, only overnight or something like this. And he built it, the house he built was built to accommodate, really one servant. He built a bedroom for this one servant supposedly. And then he built a dormitory and all the kids were supposed to come up there, when they did come up and sleep in this dormitory. Well, the way, we didn't have lights in those days, we had no electricity, and he got himself a kind of, the kind of lamps that we had, you know that you pump up and, Coleman lamps.

LW: Gasoline.

: And he was very fond of us, and he gave me a beautiful reading lamp, Coleman reading lamp. In fact, before that we had just Coleman lanterns. But he gave me this nice reading lamp. You worked it the same way. But he would eat his dinner. He'd have his breakfast, then he wouldn't have any lunch, but he would have his dinner about four o'clock in the afternoon, and nothing could move the man from his habits. His people or anything

would come they'd just have to fit themselves in. And he would have his dinner about four, half past in the afternoon. And on his active stomach before he ate he would drink a big glass of whiskey. Well, of course, it gave him a very, it was pretty potent on an empty stomach like that. And while he was so used to it, he never seemed to be intoxicated, but he was pretty, felt pretty good. And so he got to wanting to take me down to the picture show. But I went once with him and he drove so wildly that Steve put his foot down. He said you can't go anymore. It's too dangerous and he won't change. And so he wouldn't let me go anymore. Well, I think I kind of offended him because he, before that he had, oh, we'd taken a lot of hikes together. He was so proud of himself because he was about, I guess about seventy-eight and to think that we could still, we once hiked over from Nightengale to Cactus Springs and back. That was over six miles each way which, of course, was a good hike for me, let alone for him. And it was a supreme exhibit (chuckle). Oh, he told everybody about doing this. And he was so thrilled about it. And he was so thrilled because I would go hiking with him, too. And this, we had quite a nice friendship for awhile.

But we offended him by, one time we went after rock.

We went over into the

LW: Anything else, you'd like more longer.

PY: Where was this?

LW: The boys overseas, the South Pacific and some of these awful places. Very remote.

PY: Oh, you know what I wanted to ask you about Kelly, on this, you know this architectural rendering, not rendering but drawing

LW: Right. It looks like it to me.

PY: Has Randall ever discussed this use of the forty acres like that?

LW: Well, not the whole forty acres because of that is going to be held for residents. People were close coming into Desert Magazine. But I don't remember seeing, what? Yes. I don't remember seeing that particular design.

PY: What were all these buildings going to be used for?

LW: Well, I think part of it was for the crafts and arts little sections. And, of course, these people coming from all over, especially the Indians, they'd have to have some place to live. So it would be like a small, oh, what would you call it? A little apartment, not a full-

size apartment, but an

PY: Bungalow or something.

LW: No, like, oh, some of the motels. What is the term?

Something like accommodation, but that is not the term they use.

HW: I don't know. You're getting a very complicated, I guess it is. It's flashing now. Honey, if you take that, take this little glass.

LW: Well, I can . . .

END OF INTERVIEW